Midwest Climate Hub

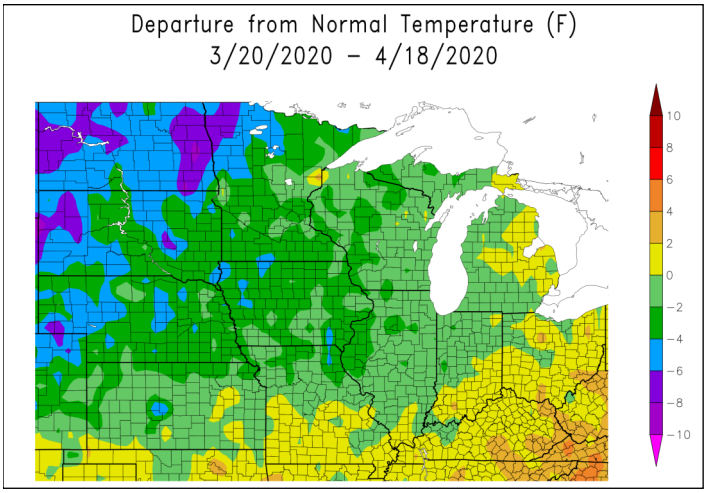
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

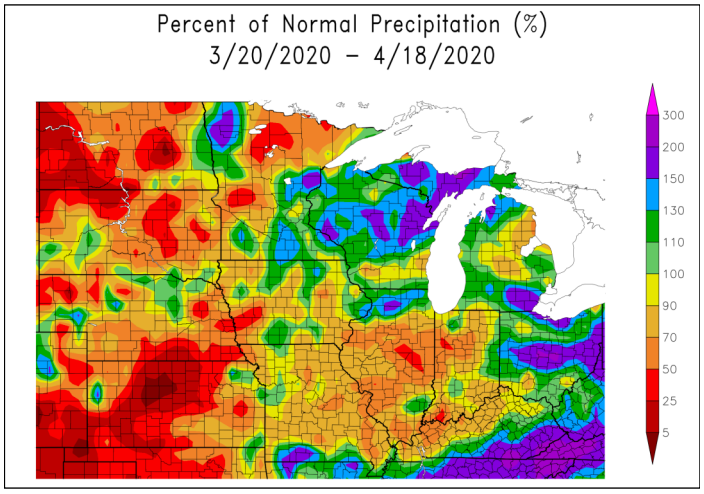
April 20, 2020

Midwest Ag-Focus Climate Outlook

Current Conditions

Cold conditions spread over the Plains and Midwest during the last week bringing extreme cold and well-below freezing conditions last week bringing the last 30 days below average, up to 8°F below in the Dakotas with slightly above in far southern and eastern areas. A change in precipitation has occurred with most of the region now drier than average, especially west where large areas are below 50% of average. Above-average precipitation areas are mostly in Wisconsin wrapping around the eastern part of the Corn Belt.



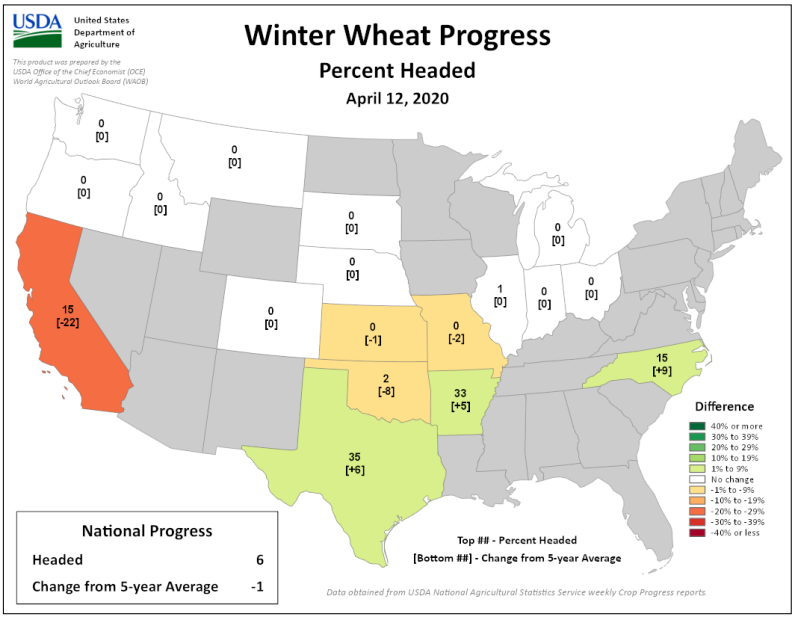


Images from High Plains Regional Climate Center (HPRCC), Online Data Services: ACIS Climate Maps. Generated: 4/20/2020

Impacts

Several days of temperatures in the teens causing freezing conditions and dropped soil temperatures into the 30s in places where crops had already been planted. Specialty crops and winter wheat were probably worst hit by the cold. Tree fruits were likely the worst hit because of early season warmth throughout the area – likely in central to southern Corn Belt areas. Northern areas were likely not as far along. Alfalfa may have also been damaged in a few places. Damage reports are still being gathered. Some corn had been planted in Illinois far enough north where soil temperatures fell possibly into the 30s. Damage to planted crops is also being watched.

**The Midwest Climate Hub would like to hear reports of damage to any crop or horticultural in your region.*



U.S. Agriculture Progress Maps Supplied by Brad Rippey, USDA World Agricultural Outlook Board.

For more information, please visit:
https://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/hubs/midwest

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(Impacts Cont.) Soil temperatures dropped with the cold but have started to rebound with the warmer weekend. Soils have also started to dry more with the recent drier conditions and warmer temperatures (before last week). Soil moisture maps indicate still mostly wetter-than-average conditions in the region, especially north. Soil surfaces have been noting drying in a few of the drier spots.

Some crops have begun planting (mainly small grains – along with a few corn and beans). But the cold slowed much progress in the last week.

U.S. Agriculture Progress Maps Supplied by Brad Rippey, USDA
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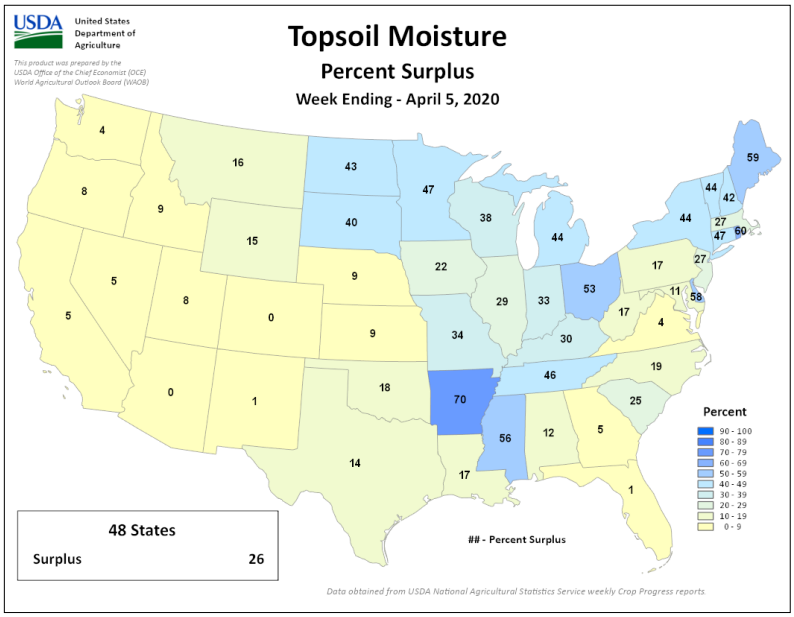
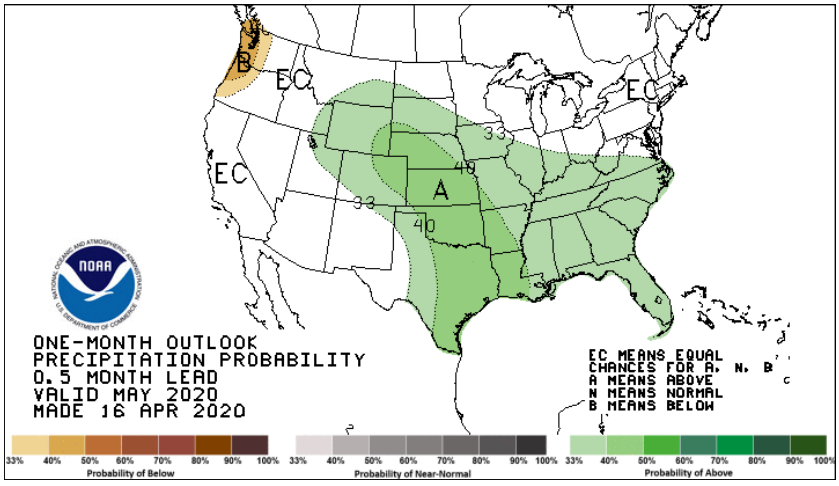
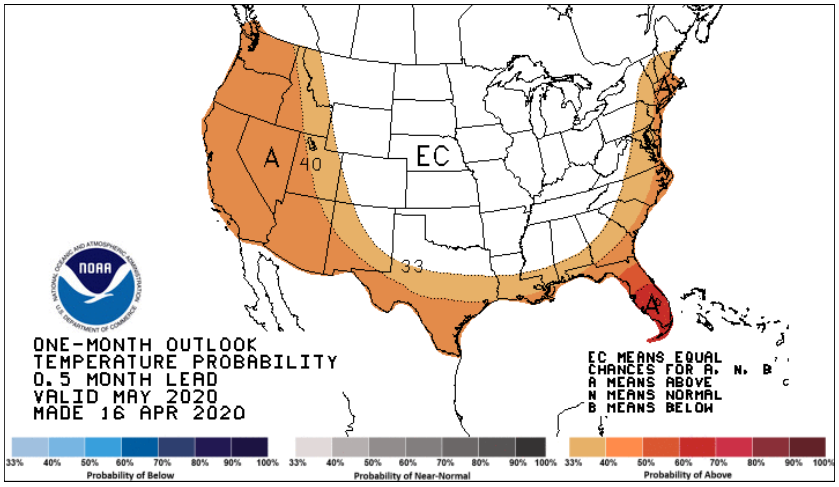


Outlook





Outlooks provided by the Climate Prediction Center

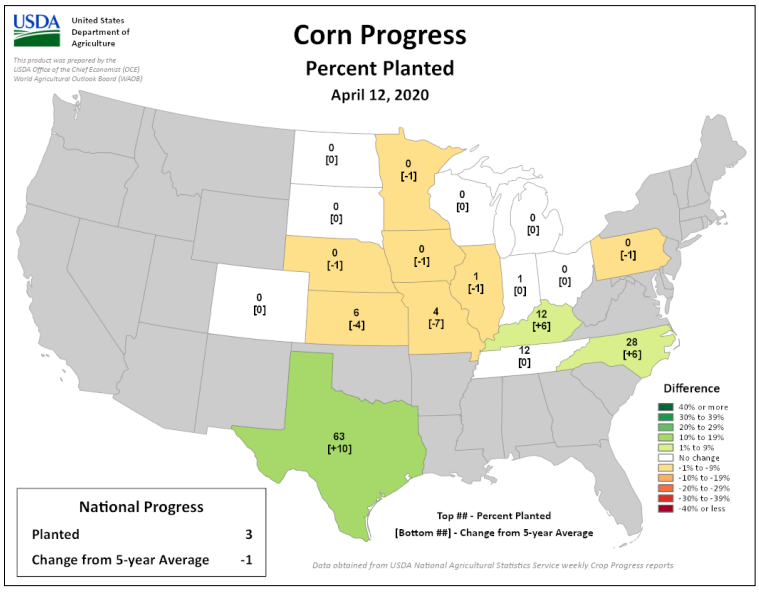
The new monthly and seasonal outlooks were released last week from the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center. Generally news is pretty good for agriculture at this point.

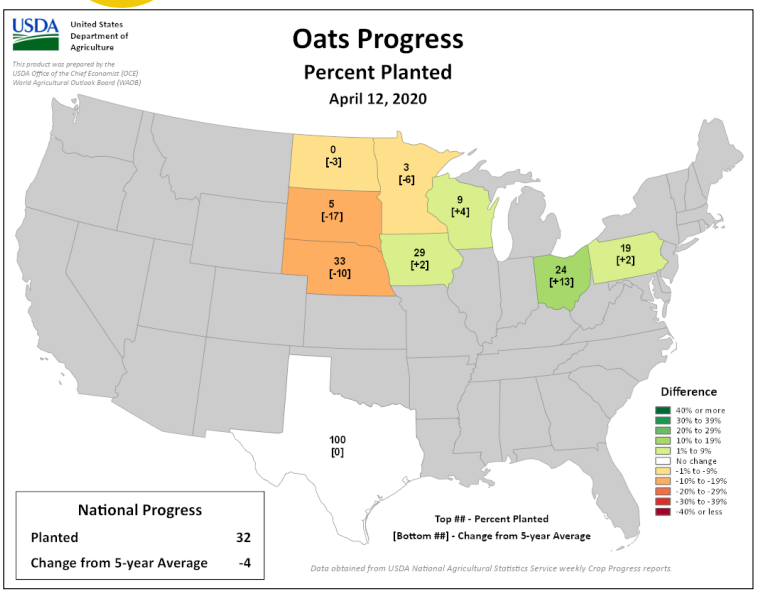
In the near term there is going to be a persistence in the pattern across the region with a low pressure area in Hudson Bay. This will continue with northwest flow aloft. Eastern areas are more likely to be colder than average with warmer west into May. The boundary of that area will shift back and forth. Warmups will be occurring but cold outbreaks are still very possible (more likely east) though likely not as cold as last week. This feature shows up into the 8-14 day and 3-4 week outlooks. The May outlook for the whole central US is for equal chances below/above on temperature reflecting more of that uncertainty for the month as a whole.

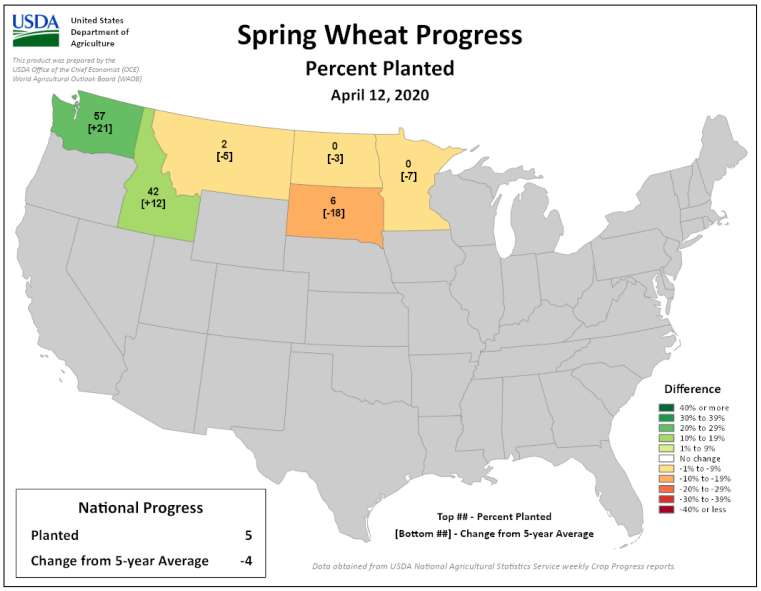
Precipitation in the near term leans a little drier due to more Canadian air. For May as a whole the Plains and Central Midwest have slightly increased chances for precipitation. The May outlook is similar to the 90 day (May-July) overall.

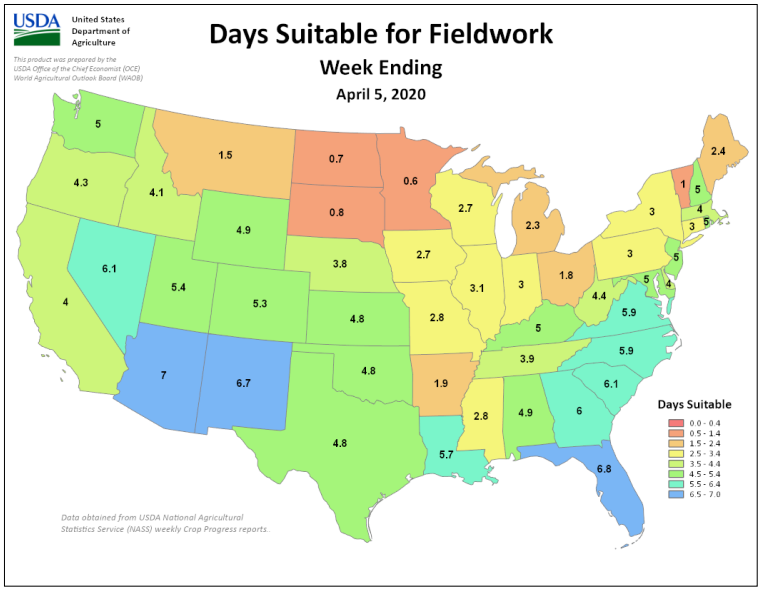
Generally these are decent outlooks for agriculture. Wet soils persist, though we have seen recent drying. Crop planting progress will still be a little slowed, but be able to move ahead. Wetter soils in the north will be more problematic. Currently, outlooks do not look too wet that would cause extreme delays. The cold temperatures at times along with wetness will still probably cause some delays.

Crop Progress









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